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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC 00488-87
4 February 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED] Assistant National Intelligence Officer for NESA

SUBJECT: Warning and Forecast Report for Near East and South Asia

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The January NESA Warning Meeting addressed three subjects: the Geneva peace talks, the Camps War in Lebanon, and the Gulf war. The meeting was sparsely attended because of the snowstorm; these topics probably will be revisited in the near future.

1. Afghanistan-Pakistan-USSR: Responding to Recent Initiatives. DI analyst [REDACTED] called Najibullah's new strategy for forming a national unity government--including offers of a six-month ceasefire, general amnesty, and autonomy for local leaders who cooperate with the government--a repackaging of old ideas. The proposals do not indicate that Moscow has broken with its basic stance of asking opponents to join a Communist regime. The Pakistanis are exploring the concept of neutrality for Afghanistan as a way of addressing Moscow's stated concerns about a bloodbath after the withdrawal of Soviet troops. DI analyst [REDACTED] noted that Pakistani officials are putting much more emphasis on domestic tensions, citing President Zia's recent comment that the government had failed to build popular support for its Afghan policy even within the ruling party.

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On a more positive note, the Soviet/Afghan initiatives have had the unintended effect of causing the resistance to put aside its differences to present a united front. All the major parties are represented at the Islamic Conference summit, and the resistance is planning to pull together a government in exile within the month.

The principal difference of opinion among the attendees was the assessment of Soviet intentions. DI analysts asserted that there is no evidence to support the view that the Soviets are simply running a deception campaign, but neither is there any concrete evidence of "seriousness." A/NIO/USSR [REDACTED] believes the Soviets are unlikely to table an 18-month schedule for withdrawing their troops.

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Warning Note

DI analysts do not see any slackening of Pakistani support for the resistance. They agree, however, that getting the Soviets out of Afghanistan--not self-determination for the Afghans--is Pakistan's priority in the peace negotiations. The Pakistanis would find it very difficult to turn down a 12-month timetable--or even an 18-month schedule--for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. In addition, while there was a consensus that the Pakistanis will keep up the military pressure on the Soviets, they still have not committed themselves to building up the political side of the resistance.

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2. Lebanon: Implications of the Camps War

Discussion. DI analyst [REDACTED] noted there has been little change in the fighting since early this month, Hizballah has benefitted most from the situation. Having disengaged itself from both Amal and the PLO, it has been free to conduct attacks against Israeli allies in the south. Hizballah's activities are likely to raise tensions not only between Syria and Israel, but between Syria and Libya. Recent information suggests that Syrian intelligence may have been linked to the recent assassination of a Libyan diplomat in Lebanon.

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DIA analyst [REDACTED] pointed out a couple of bright spots. The PLO worked hard to get a peace team in Lebanon, and Arafat can hardly refuse if the team were to ask the PLO to leave Magdusheh. The Assad-Gemayel talks are also likely to bear fruit--although all saw an agreement to reconfigure the Lebanese government as windowdressing. In addition, Assad needs his relationship with President Gemayel and the Camps War to be dead issues in order to avoid confrontations at the OIC. Another factor encouraging Assad to reach some sort of settlement is Amal's failure to demonstrate any military prowess, while the PLO's stockpiling and tunneling activity in West Beirut indicates its tenacity.

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Participants agreed that the most likely outcome of the fighting is not a resolution of the central issue--the nature of the PLO presence in Lebanon--but a "backing off into corners" of the various players. The PLO is not likely to give up its arms--it will insist on its right to protect Palestinians--but neither is a return to pre-June 1982 conditions likely.

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Warning Note

Analysts agreed that Israel is unlikely to increase its presence in southern Lebanon. The greatest danger for US interests is that increasing Hizballah activity could prompt Israeli or Syrian reprisals. It appears that the Israelis are moving toward a military response, and, although Damascus would be unlikely to respond to precision bombing raids on Hizballah, it may be unable to determine whether the attacks are on Hizballah or Syrian targets.

The reconciliation between Assad and Gemayel will force a confrontation between the President and Lebanese Armed Forces chief Ja'Ja'. Ja'Ja' would almost certainly lose, but perhaps not before the Christian community had gone through another upheaval.

3. Iran-Iraq: Prospects

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On the political side, DI analysts pointed out there is little doubt the recent Iranian success means Tehran has no need to think of peace or even winding down the war in the near term. Iran's determination to continue will be reinforced--even the tremendous casualties will be bearable--and the position of hardliners will be strengthened. For the Iraqis, the threat to Al Basrah is hurting morale, although there is no indication that a collapse of Iraqi will is imminent, the chances that Baghdad will lose the war within the next six months have increased. The Iraqis have two hopes: that Khomeini's death will trigger complications that will cause the Iranians to pull back, or that the Iraqis will change the way they fight.

Warning Note

OLA raised the issue of Iranian motivation, pointing out the coincidence between the outbreak of recent fighting and reports that Khomeini's health has deteriorated rapidly. It could be that the Iranians are about to let Khomeini die--or that he is already dead--and that the news is being withheld for maximum impact when the current fighting ends. The Iranians might then press for negotiations, claiming that the victory at Basra had achieved Khomeini's goal.


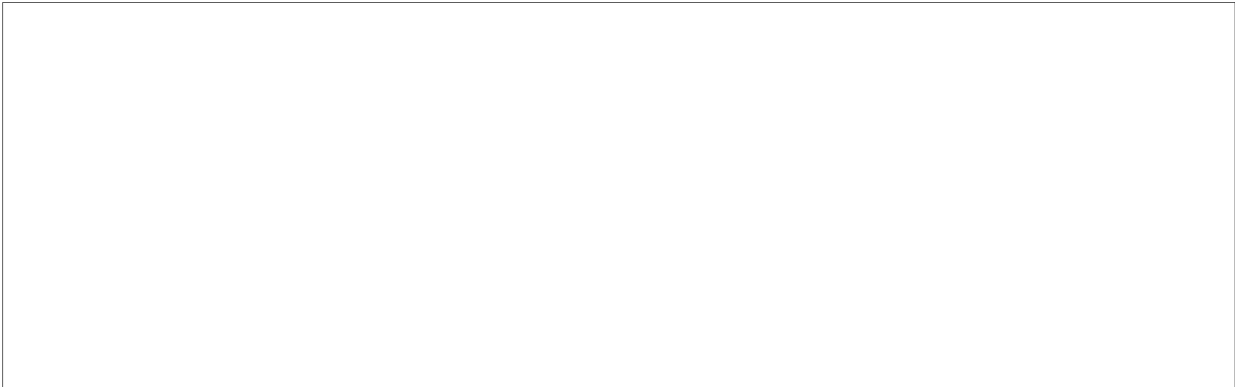
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There continues to be disagreement in the Community over the Iranians ability to sustain the current fighting. DIA also believes we overestimate the Iranians ability to take such high casualties; NIO/NESA asserts that we have consistently underestimated the Iranians' resilience and flexibility.



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The following components attended the NIO/NESA January Warning Meeting:

External

OSD

Internal

A/NIO/NESA
A/NIO/GPF
FBIS
FBIS/NESD/SA
NESA/SO/P
LDA/AN/SAPG
CRES/IRC
NESA
NESA/SO/A

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Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC-00396/87-1
29 January 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: See Distribution

FROM: Robert E. Blackwell, Jr.
Acting National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Warning Assessment -- USSR

1. Attached is the assessment prepared following the NIO/USSR Warning and Forecast meeting held on 20 January 1987. Any comments or corrections are welcome.

2. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 17 February 1987, at 1400 hours in Room 7-E-62, CIA Headquarters. Please have your clearances passed and call [redacted] with your attendance plans by COB Friday, 13 February. I solicit suggestions regarding any topics you feel we may be overlooking and request that such recommendations be forwarded to me by COB Friday, 6 February.

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Robert E. Blackwell, Jr.

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FROM: Robert E. Blackwell
Acting National Intelligence Officer for USSR

SUBJECT: Warning Assessment--USSR

1. Afghanistan: What Are the Soviets Up To?

A. Discussion:

DIA led off the discussion by arguing that the recent flurry of Soviet-inspired moves by the Kabul regime--a new national reconciliation effort and announcement of a cease-fire--do not connote a new willingness to compromise their basic goals in order to achieve a political settlement. The Soviets want to give a shot in the arm to their political efforts to break the will of the resistance and entice Pakistan into concessions. As part of the effort, the Soviets may announce additional troop withdrawals--there are a few nonessential air defense elements left--but they will be militarily insignificant. DIA believes the Soviets are still in it for the long haul but recognize the need for an invigorated effort on the political front.

The other agencies were in basic agreement with the DIA assessment. Most analysts do not believe the Soviets are hurting sufficiently to impel withdrawal and cannot envisage a political settlement that the Soviets would accept that would work. STATE and CIA/NESA pointed out that what the Soviets have already done has, nonetheless, come at some cost in terms of Moscow's relations with the regime in Kabul. CIA/SOVA said that there was a 15% chance that recent moves are the first stages of an effort by the Soviets to explore new approaches to extricating themselves. State and DIA thought even that percentage was too high.

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B. Warning:

Despite recent reports of further Soviet initiatives, the community does not believe the Soviets are in a hurry to divest themselves of their Afghan venture and does not anticipate significant additional troop withdrawals (a division or so). Because of their fear of undermining the regime in Kabul, the proposals they will table at Geneva will not be so dramatic as to cause serious differences between Pakistan and ourselves.

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2. The Rioting in Kazakhstan**A. Discussion:**

State led off by noting that Soviet Kazakhs are the least Islamic of all the Muslim minorities, having adopted the religion much later than any of the others. Moreover, Kazakh nationalism was always an urban elite phenomenon and secularly--not religiously-- based. The Kazakhs rioted because they saw the demise of Kunayev as signifying that they would be getting less in the way of jobs and resources, as indeed they will because the Kazakh bureaucracy is especially bloated. Moscow is handling the episode in much the same fashion as in the past, by attempting to divide the leaders from the led. Thus, they have dealt harshly with the leaders while taking steps to cultivate the population at large, for instance moving to increase the supply of food and consumer goods.

As regards longer term implications, State believes that the Soviets face a new kind of nationality problem, one that will be harder for both them and us to track. State also expects that it probably will now be harder for Gorbachev to install Russians in minority areas, harder for the regime to regain control of the regions and harder to get rid of Shcherbitskiy. SOVA and other State Department officers took issue with this view, noting that Kazakhstan is a special case--the one so-called minority republic in which Russians are in the majority. They believe Gorbachev cannot afford to let the riots slow him down, and that in fact he may use them to accelerate the effort to purge other recalcitrant regional party organizations. A NIO/USSR agrees with this latter view; continuing indirect attacks as Shcherbitskiy's management in the Ukraine--most recently by Ligachev--suggests that pressure continues to build against him.

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B. Warning:

Gorbachev's effort to regain control of the regions may lead to other nationalist outbreaks. How the regime handles these outbreaks will be an important test of its ability to implement its broader domestic agenda.

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3. Gorbachev's Domestic Position**A. Discussion:**

CIA/SOVA led off the discussion by noting that Gorbachev is facing the most critical test of his leadership to date. The issue is gaining agreement to a cadre policy with teeth--allowing the leadership to remove recalcitrant officials more expeditiously--and the recent plenum was repeatedly postponed because he apparently did not have sufficient support for what he wanted to do. Rumors are again rampant of sweeping personnel changes and of differences between Ligachev and Gorbachev.

The community was in general agreement with this analysis. Most felt that Gorbachev needs a meaningful result from the plenum--e. g., provisions providing for a regular review of tenure in party and government positions--or else his efforts to force change on the system will continue to face hard sledding.

B. Warning:

ANIO/USSR believes there is a 30% chance of a major leadership convulsion as happened in 1957 when Khrushchev bested the anti-party group. Odds are, however, that Gorbachev will meet this challenge. After all, it was he who took the issue on and he still has the initiative. Other signs of his strength are the harsh indictment of Brezhnev on his 80th birthday, the return of Sakharov, and the boldness of proposing a 70-year old mandatory retirement age.

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